

Mayor Michael J. Crawford of Tucson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in Fresno, California

September 12, 1996

Thank you. Wow! Thank you so much. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your wonderful signs. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. Thank you, Dot Powell. Thank you, Cal Dooley, for being a great Congressman and a truly extraordinary human being. You're very lucky to be represented by Cal Dooley in the United States Congress. Thank you, Debbie Manning, for devoting your life to teaching. Thank you, Shianne Lenhof, for being such a good representative of the young people of today and the future of America. You both made me very proud, and I can't wait to tell Hillary that you did say, "It takes a village." Thank you.

I know there are a lot of schools here today and a lot of students represented, not only here from Dailey but also from Fresno High, from Waona, Tenaya Middle School, Powers-Ginsburg, Edison Computech, Edison High, Muir, and Holland. Thank you all for being here. I want to thank the people who provided our music: the McLean High School Highlanders, the Hoover High School Marching Band, the Roosevelt High School Mariachi, the McLean High School Marching Band, the Raisin Babies Jazz Band. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

I am delighted to be back in the Valley. I did not know until Cal Dooley told me on my way over here this morning—Cal and I were in the car, and he said, "Do you realize that no President has ever come to the Valley twice in one term?" And I said, "I have a hard time believing that. What were they thinking about? I've had a good time here, and I'm glad to be here."

Your Valley contributes so much to America, especially in the power of its agricultural production, and it's been a great honor to me to work to open markets for the products produced here all around the world. And I'm proud that American exports and American farm exports are now at an all-time high,

thanks to the efforts of the farmers right here in this fine Valley.

I understand we are also joined here today by some members of our Olympic champion softball team, all from Fresno State, assistant coach Margie Wright, Julie Smith, Laura Berg, Shelly Stokes, Kim Maher, Martha Noffsinger-O'Kelley. They're all here. Thank you very much for being here.

Ladies and gentlemen and boys and girls, I want to talk to you today about what you're doing here and what we have to do as a nation to give our children the best education in the world. Just this month, as you can see from the extra buildings around here, the largest group of children in the history of America began school, the largest group of children ever, the first class of American children to be bigger than the biggest of the so-called baby-boom classes.

The education that you receive today will determine the kind of country we live in and the kind of people we are tomorrow. We must say to ourselves, to our children and for our future, we will expect and receive the highest standards from our students, our teachers, our schools, and all of us who have a responsibility to lift them up and support them.

You know, our country has had an interesting 4 years. I have pursued a straightforward strategy, that I believe in very much, to help all of you go into the 21st century with every person, every person that was talked about in the introduction, without regard to their race, their religion, their ethnic group, their background, where they start in life, every person having a chance to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given potential. The strategy is: opportunity for everyone, responsibility from everyone, and an American community where everyone—everyone—has a place, plays a role, and we all grow stronger together. And I believe that is the key to realizing our dreams in the 21st century.

If you look at where we are today, compared to where we were 4 years ago, this strategy is showing some results. We have the lowest unemployment rates in 7½ years; we have 10½ million new jobs; we have almost 4½ million new homeowners. We have a record number of new small businesses

starting in our country in every year, record exports, the deficit has been cut in all 4 years for the first time since before the Civil War. We are moving in the right direction.

There are 1.8 million fewer people on welfare; child support collections are up 40 percent. In October, 10 million hard-working Americans will get an increase in their minimum wage, and all small-business people will get tax cuts when they invest more in their businesses or when they buy health insurance. And it will be easier for them to take out retirement plans for themselves and their employees and for people to keep their retirement when they move from job to job.

Twelve million Americans have taken advantage of the family leave law, when a baby was born or a parent was sick, to keep their job, not lose it, and take care of their families. This country is moving in the right direction.

The Kennedy-Kassebaum health care reform bill made 25 million Americans eligible to get or keep their health insurance by saying you cannot be denied health insurance because somebody in your family has been sick or because you have to change jobs. That is a major step forward to strengthen the security of America's families.

And as we go forward, particularly in this election season, I ask you to remember that what works in our political system is not asking, who is to blame? What works is asking, what are we going to do together to make things better? And let's ask those questions and make this a season of ideas, not insults. We can lift the American people up. We can learn things from each other, and we can move this country forward.

Yes, we should build a bridge to the 21st century big enough and strong enough for every single one of the children in California and the children in the United States to walk across, and I want you, each and every one of you, to help to build that bridge. Will you do that? *[Applause]*

We should build a bridge with a growing economy, with a balanced budget that keeps interest rates down but does not harm Medicare and Medicaid, our commitment to education, to research, to preserving our environment. We should build a bridge where all Americans take responsibility.

The crime rate has gone down for 4 years now. We've got to keep it going down for 4 more years, and I want you to help me do that. Let's support our police on the street. Let's support the D.A.R.E. officers in the schools, preaching safe and drug-free schools. I appointed a four-star general, General Barry McCaffrey, to lead our fight against drugs. His last post in the military required him to do everything he could to stop drugs from coming into our country as the commander of all of our forces south of our border. Today he's in Los Angeles, carrying on that fight. But that's everyone's fight, and everyone has to take responsibility for waging it.

We should build a bridge to the 21st century where people can succeed at home and at work. We dare not ask our people to sacrifice their responsibilities as parents to succeed in the workplace, and we cannot expect people to have to fail in the workplace just to be good parents. We have to find a way to do both, and we have to build that bridge to the 21st century.

We have to build a bridge to the 21st century with a clean environment. Two-thirds—two-thirds—of our toxic waste sites can be cleaned up in the next 4 years, all of the worst ones. Let me tell you why that's important. We cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than were cleaned up in the 12 years before I became President. But there are still—listen to this—there are still 10 million American children living within just 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. That is wrong. Our kids should be growing up next to parks, not poison, and we need to build that bridge to the 21st century.

But nothing is more important to building that bridge to a brighter future than what is being done here at Morris Dailey, communities creating a good education, young people taking responsibility for making the most of their potential. There are so many people here who deserve our praise and our thanks throughout this community with your community-wide literacy program, all of the things that are being done here.

And let me say that I appreciate what Cal Dooley said. I don't know if you can say that we've made more efforts to help our schools and our children than ever before in history,

but I hope it's true. I'll say this: If we do it for 4 more years, it will be true. We have expanded Head Start, we've expanded the availability of college loans with the Goals 2000 program. We've given schools the flexibility to pursue national standards of excellence with local grassroots reforms. We have done a lot to help schools in California and other places try new experiments, allowing teachers to form even new schools, called charter schools. There are over 300 in the country, 90 of them right here in California, and our administration has helped to start them. Our next budget calls for 3,000 more. I believe we should let 1,000 flowers bloom, whatever it takes to bring the families, the parents, the community leaders in to support the teachers and the principals and the educators, so that together we can have the kind of village that it takes to make sure our children have excellence in education.

We should have higher standards. Every diploma should mean something. Standardized tests don't always work, but we can develop those, which we give and which are passed as people are promoted, so that you know that when you get a diploma it means something.

And I'd like to talk about just three other things that I think we ought to do. I am so impressed by the work being done here in literacy and by the work being done in this school. But you should know that in our country as a whole—partly because we have so many young people whose first language is not English—40 percent of our third graders still cannot read a book on their own. One of the things that we ought to commit ourselves to as a country is to say by the year 2000, every 8-year-old in America will be able to pick up an appropriate book and say, "I read this all by myself."

I have proposed sending 30,000 literacy tutors, AmeriCorps volunteers, young college students on work-study, and others to mobilize a million citizen volunteers to show up at any school that needs them and say, "What can we do? We're there; we're trained; we'll help." We want our children to be able to read, every single one of them, so they can make the most of the rest of their education.

Second thing we ought to do is to make sure that every classroom in America, like

Debbie Manning's class today, is connected not just with computers and software but connected to the information superhighway, to the vast network of information that opens the whole world up potentially to every student in every classroom.

Last March the Vice President and I joined other Californians on NetDay, connecting 4,000 schools in one day. On October 12th, Californians again will come together to connect more schools. If in 4 years we can connect every classroom and every library in America to the information superhighway with adequate computers, good educational software, and trained teachers, for the first time in the entire history of the United States, every child—from the poorest inner-city school to the most remote mountain rural district to the wealthiest schools in America—every child for the first time will have access to the same information, in the same way, in the same time, at the same quality. It will revolutionize educational opportunity in America. That's a bridge we have to build to the 21st century.

We have to do a better job of preparing and supporting our teachers. For the past 2 years, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future—chaired by my friend, the Governor of North Carolina, Jim Hunt—studied the state of teaching in America. The Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, today is announcing their findings in Washington.

The report makes it clear that we should have high standards for teachers but that too often teachers are not rewarded when they do a good job. If the treatment is the same, if the support is the same whether people are succeeding or not, we don't have the right incentives. We have to make sure that teachers are properly prepared, that they're supported throughout their teaching careers, that they can count on community support they need. We have to recruit and retain good people. We have to require the right high licensing and certification standards. We ought to find ways to identify and reward good teachers. We should be lifting our teachers up, not bashing them and finding ways just to be critical.

And if—when people should not be in the classroom, the removal should occur fairly

but quickly, with less expense than it does today. But the main thing is, if we had a system that supported all teachers, not just in the best schools with the best principals, not just in the best school districts with the best system—if every community had parents and teachers and principals and community leaders working together and every community said, “High standards yes, but people can meet these high standards if we’ll get out there and support them, this will be a better country and we would have a better, better school system for all of our children.”

Today I am directing the Secretary of Education to work with States and local school districts to follow up on these commission recommendations. I hope that some people here in Fresno will read this report. A lot of times, these reports are ignored, but this is a good one, and it’s worth reading.

What I want to do is to give every State in this country explicit information about how to use the Federal funds they get to achieve the highest standards for teachers. Second, to collect information from every State about what is working and share it with other States and school districts. And finally, to issue reports to let parents know how well their States, their community is doing in promoting excellence and demanding accountability. We have to set higher standards for all education, including our schools and our communities. We have to do our part, each and every one of us, if we’re going to have the best schools in the world.

And finally, let me say we have to make sure that the young men and women who will be finishing these wonderful schools we’re going to build, every single one of them, without regard to their economic circumstances and their parents, when they need it have the opportunity to go to college and get a college education.

In the last 4 years, we have expanded college scholarships for needy students, we’ve reformed the college loan program to reduce the costs and improve the repayment terms so that you can never be charged more than a percentage of your income if you’re in our direct loan program and no one ever need fear going to college because they don’t think they can repay that loan. We’ve got 50,000 young people working in AmeriCorps, earn-

ing money for college while they serve in their communities, but we have to do more. I want to make this commitment and ask you to share it with me. By the year 2000, we ought to make at least 2 years of education after high school, the equivalent of a community college degree, just as universal in 4 years as a high school diploma is today. And we can do that.

We should have a \$1,500 tax credit which will cover the cost of community college education, a HOPE Scholarship, for every person in this country who needs it. If we would simply pay for this in the form of a tax credit, then literally we could say we are making community college education free for you if you’re responsible enough to go and do a good job. It would be one of the best investments we ever made.

For those who go on to 4-year schools or graduate schools, I believe we should provide a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of tuition so people can afford to go on with their education. And I propose to let families with incomes of up to \$100,000 save more money in an IRA and withdraw from that IRA without any penalty to pay for an education. That will help America open the doors of college education to all.

And I might say, every penny of that tax cut is paid for in my balanced budget plan, dime for dime. We’re not going to let interest rates go up; we’re not going to let the deficit go up; we’re not going to go back in the direction that got us in so much trouble before. We’re going to educate America, build America, and lift Americans up through education, all Americans.

Now, think of this. Think of this. If we do all these things, we will reach our dream of a bright future for all Americans who are willing to work for it, an America in which every 8-year-old will be able to read, every 12-year-old will be able to log in on the Internet, every 18-year-old will be able to go to college, every parent that loses a job will be able to go back and get a better education and move up, not down, in economic well-being. And that bridge to the 21st century will be big enough and strong enough for every single one of us to walk across together. Will you help me build that bridge? *[Applause]*

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Morris E. Dailey Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Principal Dorothy Powell, teacher Debbie Manning, and student Shianne Lenhof.

Remarks at Rancho Cucamonga, California

September 12, 1996

The President. Wow! Thank you very much. Thank you all. Thank you for coming. Thank you for standing out here on this hot, fine day. Thank you for your enthusiasm. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you, Dr. Jerry Young, for making me feel so welcome at Chaffey College and for the work you do here. Thank you, Congressman George Brown. Ladies and gentlemen, there is not a Member of the entire Congress who knows more about the role of technology in your future, in California's future, in America's future than George Brown, and I hope you will send him back to the United States Congress so that he can continue to serve you.

Thank you, Kerri Matthews, thank you for your wonderful speech. Thank you for bringing your wonderful children and thank you for the power of your example. You, in your efforts to be a good parent, a good learner, and a successful worker in the future, you're what this country is all about, and I'm proud to be on the platform with you.

I would like to thank the folks who were here before, Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis, State Comptroller Kathleen Connell, Assemblyman Joe Baca, Mayor Bill Alexander, Art Torres, the San Bernardino County supervisors who were here, the other officials who were here, and I would like to thank the Olympians who were here, Mike Powell and Evelyn Ashford. Thank you. Where are they? They're over here somewhere. Thank you. Hi, Evelyn. Hi, Mike. Thank you.

I'd like to thank Karen Kraft who sang the national anthem, the Rancho Cucamonga High School Marching Cougar Band. Thank you very much. Thank you. The Loveland Church Choir, thank you for singing. I'll tell you, I have had a good time already, and I

thank you for that. Thank you for these great signs out here.

You know, so many times in the last 4 years when I have come to California, I have come to help the people of California with a problem they had, whether it was an earthquake, a fire, a flood, a base closing, trying to protect our borders in the south—always a problem. I come today to tell you we've also been working hard to create opportunities for the people of California, and we're on the right track to the 21st century.

In this election season, you have to ask first of all where are we now compared to where we were 4 years ago, when we had high unemployment, stagnant wages, rising crime, a dividing society, and rising cynicism. Look at where we are today. The lowest unemployment in 7½ years, 10½ million new jobs, nearly 4½ million new homeowners, the deficit's gone down for 4 years in a row by 60 percent, the first time that's happened since before the Civil War in the 1840's. We're in better shape than we were 4 years ago.

Fifteen million of the hardest pressed working Americans got a tax cut so they could raise their children and work and not be tempted to fall back into welfare. The welfare rolls are down by 1.8 million and child support collections are up by \$3 billion, 40 percent.

For 4 years, the crime rate has gone down, 12 million Americans got to take a little time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick without losing their jobs because of the family and medical leave law. On October the 1st, the new minimum wage law will become effective and 10 million Americans will get a raise.

That law will also make every small business in America eligible for a tax cut when they buy health insurance. They'll make it easier for small businesses to invest in their businesses, to hire more people, and they will be eligible for more tax relief. And we made it easier for people who work for small businesses to take out retirement plans and to keep them when they change jobs, and so many people change jobs today that's very important.

And finally, that bill gave parents who adopt children a \$5,000 tax credit to promote